

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Status

Claims 1 - 12 are currently in the application. Claims 1 and 7 are amended. Support for the amended claims may be found in Figures 4-6 and in the specification at pages 15-16. No new matter is added.

Restriction Requirement

Applicant confirms the provisional election with traverse of the embodiment shown in Figure 6a. Applicant also notes that allowance of a generic claim will entitle Applicant to consideration of the additional species.

§102 Rejections

Claims 1, 5, 7, and 11 are rejected as anticipated by Suzuki. Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11 and 12 are rejected as anticipated by Crawford. Applicant respectfully disagrees for the following reasons.

Independent claims 1 and 7 have been amended to further define the particulate distribution as "being controlled by a vibratory

particulate feeder coupled to a trough, and a plate and the trough defining a shaped orifice."

Suzuki discloses no vibratory feeder. Suzuki shows, in Figure 4, a 'hammer mill and spreading system' 20 for 'pulverized pulp' 21. Suzuki, page 5, lines 33-36. Suzuki does not show the "vibratory feeder." Accordingly, Suzuki does anticipate claims 1 and 7.

Crawford discloses no vibratory feeder. Crawford shows, in Figure 1, a dusting apparatus 37 that uses nozzles 45 and 48 to spray a powder onto the tow. Crawford, column 5, lines 8-31. Crawford does not show the "vibratory feeder." Accordingly, Crawford does anticipate claims 1 and 7.

Therefore, the anticipation rejections must be removed.

\$103 Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11, and 12 are rejected as being unpatentable over Ames in view of Baker.

Ames discloses a method of making an absorbent core. This method includes an optional distribution assembly 120. Assembly 120 drops "a powder or a slurry **vertically downward** on to tow

14."(emphasis added) Ames, column 5, lines 41-44. Ames makes no mention of a trough and plate.

Baker also discloses a method of making an absorbent core. Baker describes the motion of feed tray 334 as **back and forth**. Paragraph 0116 and Figure 3, "V". To obtain this motion, tray 334 is **isolated** from vibratory feeder 332. Paragraphs 0116 and 0122-0123. Baker also teaches that the tray needs to be set at **an angle of 10 to 45° from horizontal**, preferably 15°. Paragraph 0136. Baker also teaches that the **use of liquids** (e.g., tackifying agents (or plasticizers) is to be avoided. Paragraph 0090.

The combination of Ames and Baker can not stand. First, the combination amounts to no more than hindsight reconstruction. Where is the direction to eliminate Ames' vertical drop system and replace it with Baker's back and forth distribution system? Second, the combination would require substantial reconstruction of the references. Ames says drop the material *vertically downward*; while Baker says drop the material at *an angle from horizontal using a back and forth motion*. Where is the direction to make this choice? Third, Baker teaches away from the use of the liquid.

Ames is primarily directed to air jets for opening the tow, as such it gives little direction on the application of particulate. Ames' one teaching is that the particulate drops vertically

downward. Baker, on the other hand, is quite specific about particulate distribution. Baker uses the 'back and forth' movement of the tray to control particulate distribution. Specifically, Baker teaches that the tray must be isolated from the vibratory movement of the feeder, so that uncontrolled vibration does not interfere with particulate distribution. Paragraphs 0116 and 0122-0123. Accordingly, the skilled man would not be motivated to reconstruct the references as proposed because doing so would destroy the intended purposes of the references. Moreover, if the skilled man were motivated to make the combinations, they would not obtain the claimed invention which utilizes a vibratory feeder coupled to a trough for the distribution of particulate in the manufacture of an absorbent core.

Therefore, the combination of Ames and Baker fails.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests an early Notice of Allowance in this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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